

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 116860
ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SS-15 PRS-01 SSO-00 /032 R

DRAFTED BY PA:JCHAMBERLAIN:JC
APPROVED BY PA/M:RHECKLINGER
S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
PA, S/S, S/PRS

-----201958Z 107970 /40

O 201835Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 116860

FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL FRIDAY MAY 20 HEADED "SALT AND THE MAD MOMENTUM."
2. "THERE IS A KIND OF MAD MOMENTUM INTRINSIC TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONRY. IF A WEAPONS SYSTEM WORKS AND WORKS WELL, THERE IS STRONG PRESSURE FROM MANY DIRECTIONS TO PROCURE AND DEPLOY THE WEAPON..."
3. THAT FAMOUS ADMONITION FROM FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY MCNAMARA COMES TO MIND AS THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET UNION TRY--EVIDENTLY WITH SOME SUCCESS--TO REVIVE THE DEADLOCKED ARMS CONTROL TALKS IN GENEVA. FOR WHILE THEY TALK, THE MAD MOMENTUM PERSISTS.

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4. THE MOMENTUM OF TECHNOLOGY ITSELF IS EASILY UNDERSTOOD. THE MADNESS LIES IN THE WAY MEN MANAGE THAT TECHNOLOGY. ONE SIDE IMAGINES A NEW AND BETTER WEAPON AND PROCEEDS TO DEVELOP IT--EITHER BECAUSE IT PROMISES AN EDGE OF SUPERIORITY IN THE ARMS RACE OR BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE A VALUABLE "BARGAINING CHIP" FOR EXTRACTING CONCESSIONS FROM THE

OTHER SIDE. THE OTHER SIDE, DULY ALARMED, REFUSES TO

BARGAIN FROM A FEELING OF WEAKNESS. THE WEAPON THAT WAS MEANT TO BE BARGAINED AWAY IS ACTUALLY DEPLOYED. THE OTHER SIDE RUSHES TO CATCH UP, WITH ITS OWN "BARGAINING CHIPS." AND AT EACH STAGE, HISTORY SHOWS, THERE IS USUALLY AN OVER-REACTION. INTELLIGENCE ABOUT WEAPONS IS LIMITED; ANALYSTS MUST ASSUME THE WORST; IN STRIVING TO CATCH UP AGAINST THE "WORST-CASE" ASSUMPTIONS ONE SIDE FORGES AHEAD, UNTIL THE OTHER RESPONDS.

5. THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED A DECADE AGO WHEN THE UNITED STATES BEGAN TO BARGAIN TO PREVENT MASSIVE DEPLOYMENT OF DEFENSIVE ANTIBALLISTIC MISSILES, THE ABM'S. THE BARGAINING CHIP THE UNITED STATES INVENTED WAS THE MIRV, A MULTIPLE WARHEAD THAT GAVE EACH MISSILE 3 TO 12 NUCLEAR BOMBS DESTINED FOR SEPARATE TARGETS. IT WAS SO DESIGNED TO SATURATE ABM DEFENSES. BUT BY THE TIME FURTHER ABM DEPLOYMENT WAS FINALLY BANNED, IN SALT 1 AGREEMENTS, THE MIRV HAD BEEN EXTENSIVELY TESTED, DEPLOYED AND GIVEN OTHER MISSIONS--TOO MANY TO PERMIT ITS RECALL. THE RUSSIANS WERE NOW HASTENING TO PRODUCE THEIR OWN, AND SATELLITE PHOTOS WERE INSUFFICIENT TO VERIFY A BAN ON MIRVS.

6. AS SO OFTEN BEFORE, A WEAPON THAT WAS DESIGNED TO INCREASE SECURITY EVENTUALLY DIMINISHED IT. THE MIRVS, IN FACT, THREATEN TO UPSET THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF ARMS CONTROL BECAUSE OF THE ADVANTAGES THEY CONFER ON AN ATTACKER. BEFORE MIRV, IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN SEVERAL MISSILES TO UNCLASSIFIED

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DESTROY AN ADVERSARY'S MISSILE IN ITS PROTECTED UNDERGROUND SILO. WITH APPROXIMATELY EQUAL NUMBERS OF MISSILES ON BOTH SIDES, AN ATTACKER THUS COULD NOT AVOID RETALIATION. AS WARHEAD ACCURACY AND BLASTING POWER INCREASES, ONE MISSILE COULD POTENTIALLY DESTROY TWO OR MORE SILOS AND THE THREAT OF MASSIVE RETALIATION THAT NOW DETERS ATTACK WOULD BE WEAKENED. IN A CRISIS, THE FEAR THAT THE OTHER SIDE MIGHT SHOOT FIRST COULD TRIGGER CATASTROPHE.

7. TO PREVENT THE DEPLOYMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF COUNTER-SILO WEAPONS, BY BOTH SIDES, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS PROPOSED "DEEP CUTS" IN STRATEGIC FORCES. BUT WITH THE SOVIET UNION NOW DEPLOYING LARGE MISSILES, WITH MIRV'S, THE UNITED STATES HAS MOVED TO EQUIP ITS SMALLER LAND-BASED MISSILES WITH MARK 12A WARHEADS, WHICH WILL GREATLY INCREASE THEIR ACCURACY AND THEIR BLASTING POWER. THE NEW WARHEAD WOULD ENABLE TEN OF THESE MINUTE-MAN 111 MISSILES TO DESTROY 20 TO 30 SOVIET SILOS, RATHER THAN SIX, AS NOW. THE ADMINISTRATION MAY SEE THE MARK 12A

AS ANOTHER OF THESE "BARGAINING CHIPS" TO ENSURE PROGRESS IN THE CURRENT SALT II NEGOTIATIONS. BUT IN MOSCOW'S PERCEPTION, THEY WILL BE SEEN AS A DANGEROUS FIRST-STRIKE FORCE.

8. THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE OF NEGOTIATING A "COMPREHENSIVE" MISSILE REDUCTION AS PRESIDENT CARTER PROPOSES BY OCTOBER, WHEN THE FIRST SALT AGREEMENT ON OFFENSIVE MISSILES EXPIRES. A MORE MODEST AGREEMENT NOT COVERING THIS POINT IS THE MOST LIKELY. AND YET DEPLOYMENT OF THE MARK 12A WARHEAD'S NEW GUIDANCE SYSTEM IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN OCTOBER. PAUL WARNKE, THE ARMS CONTROL DIRECTOR, HAS CONCEDED THAT JUST AS THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE BEEN SAFER WITHOUT MIRV'S ON EITHER SIDE, IT WILL BECOME STILL LESS SECURE ONCE THE SILO-BUSTERS ARE DEPLOYED BY BOTH SIDES.

9. ONCE THE MARK 12A WARHEAD IS DEPLOYED, ITS USEFULNESS
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FOR BARGAINING WILL BE LOST. IT WILL ALARM THE RUSSIANS INTO NEW EXERTIONS WITHOUT IN ANY WAY MAKING OUR MISSILES LESS VULNERABLE TO THE RUSSIAN SILO-BUSTERS THAT WE FEAR. THERE IS NO IMMINENT DANGER TO THE TOTALITY OF AMERICAN NUCLEAR FORCES THAT MAKES THIS WEAPON NECESSARY THIS YEAR OR NEXT; MOSCOW'S DEPLOYMENT OF MIRV MISSILES IS LESS THAN HALF-WAY TO THE DANGER POINT.

10. BUT DEPLOYMENT OF THE MARK 12A WARHEAD COULD MAKE ARMS LIMITATION EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT HAS ALREADY BECOME. IT SHOULD BE POSTPONED--AND SOON ENOUGH TO INFLUENCE THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SALT TALKS. THIS WOULD NOT BE A UNILATERAL WEAKENING OF THE AMERICAN DEFENSES. IT WOULD BE A TEMPORARY SELF-DENIAL TO STRENGTHEN THE FORCES OF REASON AGAINST THE MAD MOMENTUM. (END TEXT.)
CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, PRESS COMMENTS, SALT (ARMS CONTROL), NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE116860
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JCHAMBERLAIN:JC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770180-0770
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770533/aaaabcok.tel
Line Count: 155
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 60fec58c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2427896
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/60fec58c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009